

# A NATURE POEM FOR EVERY SUMMER EVENING

EDITED BY JANE MCMORLAND HUNTER







**8<sup>TH</sup> JULY**



## *Evening Rain*

What is lovelier than rain that lingers  
Falling through the western light?  
The light that's red between my fingers  
Bathes infinite heaven's remotest height.

Whither will the cloud its darkness carry  
Whose trembling drops about me spill?  
Two worlds, of shadow and splendour, marry:  
I stand between them rapt and still.

Laurence Binyon (1869–1943)



17<sup>TH</sup> JULY



## *Little Birds of the Night*

Little birds of the night  
Aye, they have much to tell  
Perching there in rows  
Blinking at me with their serious eyes  
Recounting of flowers they have seen and loved  
Of meadows and groves of the distance  
And pale sands at the foot of the sea  
And breezes that fly in the leaves.  
They are vast in experience  
These little birds that come in the night.

Stephen Crane (1871–1900)



**31<sup>ST</sup> JULY**



## *Haze*

Woof of the sun, ethereal gauze,  
Woven of Nature's richest stuffs,  
Visible heat, air-water, and dry sea,  
Last conquest of the eye;  
Toil of the day displayed, sun-dust,  
Aerial surf upon the shores of earth,  
Ethereal estuary, frith of light,  
Breakers of air, billows of heat,  
Fine summer spray on inland seas;  
Bird of the sun, transparent-winged,  
Owlet of noon, soft-pinioned,  
From heath or stubble rising without song;  
Establish thy serenity o'er the fields.

Henry David Thoreau (1817–1862)



7<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST



## *In the Water*

FROM A MIDSUMMER HOLIDAY

VERSE 1

The sea is awake, and the sound of the song  
of the joy of her waking is rolled  
From afar to the star that recedes, from anear  
to the wastes of the wild wide shore.  
Her call is a trumpet compelling us homeward:  
if dawn in her east be acold,  
From the sea shall we crave not her grace to rekindle  
the life that it kindled before,  
Her breath to requicken, her bosom to rock us,  
her kisses to bless as of yore?  
For the wind, with his wings half open, at pause  
in the sky, neither fettered nor free,  
Leans waveward and flutters the ripple to laughter  
and fain would the twain of us be  
Where lightly the wave yearns forward from under  
the curve of the deep dawn's dome,  
And, full of the morning and fired with the pride  
of the glory thereof and the glee,  
Strike out from the shore as the heart in us bids  
and beseeches, athirst for the foam.

Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837–1909)



**12<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST**



## *Drawing Near the Light*

Lo, when we wade the tangled wood,  
In haste and hurry to be there,  
Nought seem its leaves and blossoms good,  
For all that they be fashioned fair.

But looking up, at last we see  
The glimmer of the open light,  
From o'er the place where we would be:  
Then grow the very brambles bright.

So now, amidst our day of strife,  
With many a matter glad we play,  
When once we see the light of life  
Gleam through the tangle of to-day.

**William Morris (1834–1896)**



**20<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST**

## *The Butterfly Trainers*

Butterflies didn't always know  
How to spread their wings and go  
Gliding down the slopes of air  
On their spangled wings and fair;  
Never dared to leave the land  
Till the elves took them in hand,  
Made them bridle, bit and reins  
Out of shiny corn silk skeins;  
Drove them through the long blue hours,  
Introducing them to Flowers.

Rachel Field (1894–1942)



**28<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST**



## *The Yellow-hammer*

When, towards the summer's close,  
Lanes are dry,  
And unclipt the hedgethorn rows,  
There we fly!

While the harvest waggons pass  
With their load,  
Shedding corn upon the grass  
By the road,

In a flock we follow them,  
On and on,  
Seize a wheat-ear by the stem,  
And are gone ...

With our funny little song,  
Thus you may  
Often see us flit along,  
Day by day.

**Thomas Hardy (1840–1928)**